

John McCain, Lamar Alexander, Norm Coleman, Judd Gregg, John E. Sununu, Pat Roberts, Craig Thomas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Thursday, May 11, immediately after the time for the two leaders, the Senate begin consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4297, the Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act; provided further that 8 hours remain out of the statutory time limit and that it be equally divided. I further ask consent that following the vote on the adoption of the conference report, and notwithstanding rule XXII, there be 60 minutes of debate, equally divided, between the chairman and ranking member of the HELP Committee or their designees prior to a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the modified substitute to S. 1955, the small business health plans bill, with no intervening action or debate, and the live quorum waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, may I inquire of the majority leader, at this point, are we closing down debate on this bill?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, through the Chair, on the small business reform bill, we will have 1 hour prior to the cloture vote. And during the day tomorrow, I expect people will be coming to the floor talking, as well, on small business health plans.

Mr. DURBIN. If I may ask through the Chair to the majority leader, as I understand the procedural position we are in, earlier today the majority leader filled the tree, as we say, to preclude any further amendments. And now, as I understand it, the majority leader has filed a cloture motion, which basically means we are going to bring this to a close without further amendments, without further debate, one up-or-down vote on cloture?

Mr. FRIST. That is correct. Someone could offer an amendment tomorrow prior to the cloture vote, if they so desire.

Mr. DURBIN. If I might ask the majority leader through the Chair, I asked earlier today if we would be allowed to bring up the stem cell research issue, which the majority leader has expressed his support of, and whether we could bring that up for a vote this week while we are on Health Care Week so we could address this issue of medical research.

I would like to ask the majority leader through the Chair if we could bring it up before cloture or after cloture?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, through the Chair, the interest in stem cells will be debated in the future, at a time that is mutually set by the Democratic leadership working with the Repub-

lican leadership. Stem cells can be discussed but will not be voted upon before this cloture motion.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FINAL PASSAGE OF H.R. 4939

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wanted to take this opportunity to discuss why I made the difficult decision to vote against H.R. 4939, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery.

The United States is involved in operations overseas while dealing with natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. On May 4, 2006, I voted against a \$109 billion spending bill that was \$17 billion more than what the President originally requested. Of course, on occasion, times call for emergency spending, but this bill goes far beyond what anyone would call emergency spending.

Many items in this bill do not constitute "emergency" spending. The bill would funnel millions of dollars to a road in Hawaii, millions of dollars in grants for research not related to emergencies, and still millions more to subsidize the volunteer work program AmeriCorps. Are these projects necessary? Possibly, but they are not an "emergency." These spending proposals should go through the annual authorization and appropriations process. Congress must tighten the definition of what qualifies as an emergency. The use of supplemental spending bills must be saved for the true emergencies. True emergency funding is being bogged down with nonessential projects that have no business being in an emergency supplemental spending bill.

We must not saddle our children, their children, and their children's children with debt that we incurred because we did not properly restrain our spending. My very first speech in the Senate Chamber was on the need for a balanced budget. In 1997, I said that the Federal Government must learn to live within its means. Without any restraint on spending, we are simply adding onto our Nation's enormous debt. Unfortunately, this is still true today.

I recently visited American troops stationed in Kuwait. I always have and will continue to support our troops. I appreciate the sacrifices they make and the sacrifices of the families, friends, businesses and communities they leave behind.

Our American service men and women should have the financial resources they need to fight this crucial war on terror. This bill should be about voting to provide financial stability that allows the U.S. Government to support our troops and our veterans into the future. It is unfortunate that other nonemergency spending projects made their way into an important bill that included vital funding for our troops. I wish that the Senate would have followed the President's proposal and only included funding for real emergencies.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL STEPHEN R. BIXLER

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to LCpl Stephen R. Bixler of Suffield, CT.

Corporal Bixler, a member of the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, NC, was killed in action on May 4 while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Anbar Province, Iraq. He was struck while on foot patrol by an improvised explosive device on his second tour of duty in Iraq. Corporal Bixler is fondly remembered as a quiet but strong leader with strength of character and self-assurance unusual for someone of his age. As an Eagle Scout and former senior patrol leader in his Boy Scout troop, Corporal Bixler enjoyed helping others. He joined the Marines shortly after graduating from Suffield High School in 2003 and served in Haiti prior to his tour in Iraq. He was well received and respected when he proudly visited his high school, where he had been admired as he excelled at academics and athletics, to talk to students about his experiences. He was a true patriot and defender of our great Nation's principles of freedom of justice. Corporal Bixler served as an example of the potent American spirit, which permeates this Nation's history.

I am both proud and grateful that we have the kind of defender exemplified by Corporal Bixler serving in the Persian Gulf. Our Nation extends its heartfelt condolences to his family. To his father, Richard, his mother, Linda, and sister, Sandra, we extend our profound gratitude for sharing this outstanding Marine with us, and we offer our prayers and support.

STAFF SERGEANT MARK WALL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of a truly brave American who has passed away while defending our country. SSG Mark Wall died April 27, 2006, in Mosul, Iraq, where he was serving his country as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Staff Sergeant Wall was assigned to C Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry regiment in Fort Wainwright, AK. He was deployed to Iraq in August of 2005 and served near Mosul. I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to his parents, Arthur and Helen Wall, his two brothers and his sister.

Mark Wall graduated from Alden High School in 1997 where he participated in basketball, football, track, chorus, and band. He was a Boy Scout, attaining the rank of Eagle Scout in 1997. He also participated in 4-H, garden and photography projects, and FFA. Staff Sergeant Wall joined the Iowa National Guard in February of 1997. He attended classes at Ellsworth Community College studying agricultural business and worked as an electrician's helper before joining the Active-Duty Army in May of 2000.

I understand that Mark had a passion for the outdoors and took advantage of that passion while he was in Alaska, prospecting for gold, hiking, fishing, and skiing.

I would like to again give my condolences to the family of SSG Mark Wall. He served his country with pride and passion, and we are all saddened by his loss. I would like my colleagues in the Senate to take a moment and remember the life of Mark Wall and remember the tremendous sacrifice he gave for us and our great country.

SITUATION IN DARFUR

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I join the American public and the international community in congratulating the signatories of the recent peace agreement signed in Abuja, Nigeria on May 5, 2006. I hope that this peace agreement marks a dramatic turning point in bringing about a solution to the genocidal conflict that has ravaged the Darfur region of Sudan. The administration deserves to be commended for getting the Sudanese government and the Sudan Liberation Army to the table and for maintaining a commitment to completing this peace process. This does not mean, however, that we or the international community can return to complacency, satisfied that we have done our part. Quite the contrary.

At this point, it is essential that the peace agreement be expanded to include those parties that have not yet signed. Those without a stake in the current political power and wealth sharing agreements will have few incentives to help build peace in the region, and will most likely be spoilers to the peace agreement. These parties must be encouraged to join and abide by the accord. Additionally, it is critical that the international community, working with the African Union, the United Nations, and regional partners, develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure that the peace agreement is implemented and adhered to by both the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Army. The Darfur region is facing an extremely fragile period. Now is the time to show international resolve for quelling the remaining instability throughout the region and for kick-starting all of the elements of the peace agreement. We must also move quickly to institute and strengthen mechanisms and systems to ensure that the parties to not backslide in to full-scale conflict.

In addition, we must strengthen the peacekeeping capabilities of the African Union and ensure that it has the capacity to help monitor and enforce the peace agreement. The African Union has worked hard to execute its broad and far-reaching mandate with limited resources and experience, and it will need support to be a contributor to establishing a lasting peace in the region. We must also work to introduce a United Nations peacekeeping mission into the region as quickly as possible. I applaud President Bush's decision to send Secretary Rice to the United Nations to seek a resolution authorizing a U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur. I supported the recent amendment to the fiscal year 2006 emergency supplemental appropriations bill adding \$60 million to fund a U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur, matching similar legislation in the House. With this clear message of support from the U.S. Congress, it is now up to the administration to work with our friends and allies at the U.N. to reach agreement on a resolution authorizing a peacekeeping force, and exert robust diplomatic pressure on those who would try to block it.

We must not forget the massive humanitarian tragedy that is still unfolding. Even as the peace deal was being finalized, the U.N. World Food Program, WFP, announced that it would have to cut rations by over 50 percent in Darfur beginning in May. Many of the over 2 million refugees who have been forced from their homes and their livelihood are on the brink of starvation, and this already massive tragedy could yet take an even more devastating turn. Systematic gender-based violence against women and girls continues unabated and basic safety and security continue to be denied to Darfurians. Humanitarian organizations trying to work in the region face increasing difficulties in fulfilling their mission, and safe areas have diminished to unprecedented levels. The situation, in short, remains disastrous and the lives and well-being of millions hang in the balance. If anything, we must increase our efforts to protect the region most vulnerable, and to support Darfurians in this fragile period. Failure to do so could have a negative impact on the peace agreement.

Looking ahead to the implementation of the peace agreement and to establishing peace in the region, it will be critically important to address the crimes against humanity that have been committed, and to take a stand against the cycle of impunity and injustice that we have seen occur over the last 3 years. Those who commit crimes against humanity must know that the world is watching, and that they will be held accountable for their actions.

In conclusion, we have reasons to be optimistic. We must not ignore, however, the fact that now the hard work begins.

A MONTANA VISIT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I am proud to rise today and announce a historic event in my home State. For only the second time in the history of Montana, our great State will welcome the President of Ireland. President Mary McAleese has displayed courage, intellect, determination, and passion as she has guided her country for nearly a decade. During this time her country has experienced unprecedented growth, quickly rising to the upper echelons of nations.

President McAleese will make an inaugural pilgrimage to a city whose history has been intimately tied with Ireland's for more than a century. In 1882, a lone Irish immigrant, driven by the work ethic instilled in his homeland and his desire to succeed, made a discovery that would forever change the face of Montana, the West, and America. The city was Butte, MT, and the man was Marcus Daly. Three hundred feet into the belly of the Earth, Daly set off an explosion that unearthed a revolution. Before his amazed eyes lay one of the riches veins of copper the world had every seen, and with it the unknowing hopes of millions of Irish immigrants.

Butte, and its neighbor to the northwest Anaconda, quickly became thriving metropolises turning these mining communities into a virtual mosaic of nationalities and ethnicities. When walking down the street, one could hear the chatter of Eastern Europeans, smell cooking from the Middle East, or view native dress from Scandinavia. But above all was the voice of the Irish. The Irish made Butte their own, easing their longing for their native Eire by molding the city to reflect the land from their past. The streets were vibrant with festivities straight from the homeland; these hard-working immigrants, ranging in professions from doctors to lawyers to miners and gandy dancers, populated this young bustling city and gave it the feel of an island thousands of miles away.

As the years passed, the pride of the Irish continued to ring strong, and with it the city of Butte. Butte quickly became the heart of Montana, and shaped the figures whose names would forever be remembered in the lore of our State. Names like Mike Mansfield and Burton Wheeler will be etched in the hearts and minds of Montanans for many years to come, and with them the tradition of the Irish.

Today, Butte remains a vibrant city, as the new generation of Irish-Americans listen to the whispers of their ancestors and continues to uphold the proud tradition of being Butte Irish. With the same values that turned this sleepy community into the heartbeat of the West, the people of Butte continue to thrive and the city remains as strong as the immigrants who first settled it.

As President McAleese is embraced by the spirit of this magnificent city and by the residents who carry on the